United Nations

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/1491
4 October 1993

MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Security Council extends UNPROFOR mandate until 31 March 1994, following Friday decision on 4-day extension; authorizes UNPROFOR, acting in self-defence, to use force to ensure its security and freedom of movement in Croatia.

+ Secretary-General deplores downing of two United States Quick Reaction Force helicopters in Somalia; says United Nations will not be deterred from implementing Security Council mandate; UNOSOM II detains 21 suspects in Mogadishu operation.

+ Burundi, Cape Verde, Cambodia, Cuba, United Arab Emirates, Syria, Iran and Slovakia among speakers in General Assembly's general debate today.

+ Malaysia, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Ireland, Burkina Faso, Sri Lanka, Congo and Mali among speakers in general debate on Friday.

+ France, United Kingdom and United States table draft resolution on tightening of Security Council sanctions against Libya; Secretary-General to meet this evening with Libyan Foreign Minister regarding implementation of resolution 731 (1992).

* * *

Acting under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, the Security Council today decided to extend the mandate of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) until 31 March 1994. The Council authorized UNPROFOR, in carrying out its mandate in Croatia and acting in self-defence, to take the necessary measures, including the use of force, to ensure its security and freedom of movement. The Council took that action by unanimously adopting resolution 871 (1993). The Council had decided on Friday, in resolution 870 (1993), to extend UNPROFOR's mandate for four days.

(more)

For information media--not an official record

The Council once more condemned continuing military attacks within Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and reaffirmed its commitment to ensure respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of those Republics, and of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, where UNPROFOR was deployed.

The Council reaffirmed the crucial importance of full and prompt implementation of the United Nations peace-keeping plan for Croatia, including the provisions concerning the demilitarization of the United Nations Protected Areas (UNPAs), and called on all concerned, particularly the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro), to cooperate in its full implementation. The Council declared that non-cooperation in the implementation of its resolutions, or external interference in respect of full implementation of the peace-keeping plan for Croatia, would have serious consequences. The Council said full normalization of the international community's position towards those concerned would take into account their actions in implementing all relevant resolutions.

The resolution called for an immediate cease-fire agremeent between the Croatian Government and the local Serb authorities in the UNPAS, mediated under the auspices of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia, and urged them to cooperate fully in its implementation. The Council stressed the importance of the restoration of Croatia's authority in the "pink zones", and called for the revival of the Joint Commission established under the chairmanship of UNPRFOR.

The Council asked the Secretary-General to report in two months on progress towards implementation of the Croatia peace-keeping plan and relevant resolutions, taking into account the Croatian Government's position, and decided to reconsider UNPROFOR's mandate in the light of that report.

The Secretary-General had recently recommended that the Council renew the Force's mandate for six months. However, the Croatian Government had stated that it could not accept prolongation of the mandate without major changes based on existing Council resolutions and reports of the Secretary-General, particularly the "Vance Plan".

* * *

Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali today deplored an incident in Somalia on Sunday in which two helicopters from the United States Quick Reaction Force were shot down by armed gunmen. Five United States soldiers were killed and a number were wounded, bringing total United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II) casualties to 66 dead and over 200 wounded.

The latest incident would not deter the United Nations from implementing its mandate in Somalia as authorized by the Security Council, the Secretary-General stated. The humanitarian and political objectives of that mandate would be pursued vigorously and, where conditions permitted, the pace of their implementation would be accelerated. He said the international community would continue to work with the Somali people to prevent a return to the chaos and anarchy which had cost over 300,000 people their lives.

(more)

In a related development, Special Representative Jonathan Howe said that United Nations troops had yesterday launched an operation designed to apprehend a number of General Mohammad Farah Aidid's key aides who were suspected of complicity in the 5 June attack on Pakistani peace-keepers and subsequent attacks on United Nations personnel. The latest such attack had occurred yesterday morning, when a military vehicle had been blown up, killing a Somali-American interpreter and injuring three United States soldiers.

Admiral Howe said the operation had apprehended 21 suspects, including some key opponents of the implementation of United Nations mandates, but had cost some Somali and UNOSOM II casualties. He paid tribute to the valour of the personnel involved.

Meanwhile, a United Nations spokesman said that one Malaysian soldier had been killed in Somalia today and six Malaysian and two Pakistani soldiers wounded, while assisting United States troops who were under attack.

* * *

The President of Burundi, Melchior Ndadaye, this morning told the General Assembly that the people of his country, having held free, pluralist elections on 1 June, took pride in having taken control of their own history. He said they hoped profoundly that there would never again be any bloodshed caused by ethnic confrontation. Side by side, people from all ethnic backgrounds, all regions and various political persuasions were working together to ensure that Burundi's democratization was irreversible. He also appealed to the international community to give his country the help it needed to repatriate and resettle the thousands of refugees who had fled to other countries.

He deplored the flow of finance from the South to North, and said that greater regional coordination and solidarity was needed. It was high time that the peoples of the third world no longer directed a childlike attention to the outside world, and that they explored their own capacities for self-centred and self-maintained development, using their own advantages to meet their own needs. International solidarity, he said, could only be efficient if it operated in a radically new context of self responsibility, and for bringing about mutually profitable exchange.

* * *

The President of Cape Verde, Antonio Mascarenhas Monteiro, said in the general debate today that the situation in which migrant workers found themselves in certain States was as important an issue as the protection of minority rights. Given that Cape Verde's emigrant community abroad was larger than the island's resident population, he was deeply concerned about the increasing difficulties facing migrant workers, including those in some developing countries. The worsening economic situation had brought worsening discrimination against such workers and the implementation of policies depriving them of hard-won rights. Many had been expelled from countries where they had worked for a long time and to whose economies they had made a major contribution.

(more)

Human rights, he said, could not be adequately protected and promoted if many countries continued to live on the periphery of development and their populations continued to endure extreme poverty. He supported calls for the democratization of Africa, but emphasized that the promotion of democracy called for more than setting up formal democratic mechanisms and guarantees. Its consolidation and full acceptance by all segments of the population required a favourable internal economic climate that made living conditions better for all, he said.

* * *

His Royal Highness Sdech Krom Luong Norodom Ranariddh, First Prime Minister of Cambodia, today expressed profound thanks for the success of the United Nations operation in his country, which had brought peace, freedom, independence and democracy. He told the General Assembly that that success had been based on the will of the international community to save Cambodia, and on the will of the Cambodian people to save their homeland. The peace process continued to advance in accordance with the Paris Peace Agreeements, he said. Free and fair elections had been held and the outcome had been most encouraging for the future of democracy. A new Constitution had been drafted, setting up a Constitutional Monarchy in which the people were the sole source of State powers. The Royal Government would ensure stability and peace for reconstruction and development.

The "Khmer Rouge group" would be welcomed into the Royal Army and the Royal Government as advisors, he continued. In return, it must dismantle its administration, its army and its zones to become part of a unified and indivisible Cambodia. The country needed international aid, he added. Among the measures required were the establishment of a United Nations Integrated Office in Phnom Penh; the maintenance of representation by specialized agencies; the establishment of a Human Rights Centre; the continuation of demining operations; and the maintenance of a team of unarmed military observers to help with confidence-building among the Cambodian people.

* * *

Roberto Robaina Gonzalez, Cuba's Minister of Foreign Affairs, told the General Assembly today that the United Nations was not democratic, and that there was nothing more insecure on Earth than the Security Council. Warning that the Council could become a docile instrument in the hands of a few Powers, he said the veto privilege should be eliminated, one category of membership should be established in accordance with the principle of sovereign equality of States, and members should be subject to periodic democratic elections. Council membership should be expanded and the principle of equitable geographical representation should be applied. He said measures should be adopted to ensure a balance between the Council and the Assembly regarding the maintenance and strengthening of international peace and security.

The Foreign Minister went on to say that the United States' "inhuman blockade" of Cuba had been reinforced in the last few months, in defiance of

an Assembly resolution regarding the need for its ending. The extra-territorial nature of the blockade had increased and pressure was on the rise. Cuba was being prevented from buying drugs necessary for its health and resources necessary for its well-being. "To live in a sovereign and unyielding country is a crime for which two million children are threatened to pay with their lives," he said, adding that there would be "no possible absolution for those who commit or support this genocide".

* * *

The Foreign Minister of the United Arab Emirates, Rashid Abdullah Al-Nuaimi, said this morning that the events in the Gulf after the liberation of Kuwait had produced a new political reality which reinforced the importance of settling disputes through negotiation and other peaceful means. Guided by those principles, his country had expressed its readiness to enter into direct negotiations with Iran with regard to its occupation in 1971 of Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa, which, he said, belonged to the United Arab Emirates.

The Iraqi regime, he continued, was following a policy of procrastination in implementing Security Council resolutions. The international community must oblige the regime to implement them, to respect the territorial integrity of Kuwait and to refrain from reasserting its expansionist aims. He also called for the international community to pressure the Iraqi regime to immediately release all Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti prisoners of war and detainees. He welcomed the agreement reached between the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and Israel as the first step towards settling the Arab-Israeli conflict. He said that such a settlement should enable the Palestinian people to exercise the right of self-determination and should bring about a total Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories, including Jerusalem and the Syrian Golan.

* * *

Farouk Al-Shara, Foreign Minister of Syria, said in the general debate today that Arabs and Muslims had the right to wonder why they were slandered merely because some individuals committed a terrorist act against Western targets. He said no such slander was directed against those who were responsible for terrorist acts against thousands of Arab victims in the Occupied Territories and the south of Lebanon. The time had come, he added, for an awakening of the Western conscience and for an objective tackling of the sensitive issues affecting the dignity of peoples and the sovereignty of States.

Syria, he continued, had played a fundamental role in the convening of the Middle East peace conference in Madrid. For peace to be accepted by all the peoples involved, it had to be just, to include the return of all occupied Arab territories and to achieve stability and security for all in the region. Syrians did not overestimate the weight of the Palestinian-Israeli agreement, he said, because each provision needed new negotiations and because of its probable repercussions, given the sharp divisions it had created in the "Palestinian arena". The most serious threat to the peace process, he added,

(more)

was caused by Israeli attempts to give the impression that peace had been achieved in the region through the signing of the agreement, and that the international community, particularly the Arab countries, had to behave accordingly.

* * *

Ali Akbar Velayati, Iran's Minister for Foreign Affairs, told the General Assembly today that the Security Council's failure to face the Palestinian crisis and the constant aggressions against the Palestinian people, Lebanon and Syria, and its failures to enforce its own resolutions, showed the prevailing preference for political interests over peace, security, international law and equity. With the support of powerful States, Israel had totally disregarded Council resolutions, pursued a militaristic policy and persisted in aggression. Peace and stability could only return to the Middle East through even-handed treatment and the restoration of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, he said. Iran rejected the recently signed Accord as a conspiracy against Islam and Palestine.

The Bosnian tragedy was more evidence of the consequences of the Security Council's acquiescence in aggression, the Foreign Minister said. The Council had failed to fulfil its international responsibility and had even deprived the victims of the means to defend themselves, he said, adding that the arms embargo against the Bosnian Government should be lifted. He noted that Article 24 of the Charter conferred primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security on the Council in order to ensure prompt and effective action by the United Nations. The Council acted on behalf of the membership of the Organization and was therefore accountable to the entire Membership gathered in the General Assembly, he stressed.

* * *

Jozef Moravcik, Foreign Minister of the Slovak Republic, said this afternoon in the general debate that the decision of the Geneva Conference to seek a nuclear test ban treaty was a signal for the whole non-proliferation regime. Slovakia supported the universality and indefinite extension of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, and hoped that the question of the nuclear arsenal of the former Soviet Union would be speedily resolved in the same spirit of non-proliferation. He said that the proposed enlargement of the membership of the Conference on Disarmament provided the chance for the Slovak Republic to become a member, and that the proposal should be adopted as soon as possible.

Mr. Moravcik said his country supported the establishment of a United Nations high commissioner for human rights. With civilian populations increasingly being targeted in internal conflicts, it was necessary that States and parties to conflicts strictly observe the rules and principles of international humanitarian law. He expressed support for efforts to bring those who had committed such crimes to justice and for the establishment of an international criminal court. He also called on the international community to formulate appropriate rules and standards to regulate large-scale population movements, while seeking solutions for the causes and consequences.

(more)

* * *

Mahathir Bin Mohamad, the Prime Minister of Malaysia, told the General Assembly on Friday that according to the stereotypical Western concept of a third world country, his country should be politically unstable and economically depressed. Yet it was stable, despite the multi-racial time-bomb inherited from a colonial past, and was able to run its affairs. To attract foreign investment Malaysia needed a reputation for stability and competence. When investors heard that it would explode in racial violence, they were likely to invest elsewhere, even though such statements were false.

While democracy was being promoted as the only acceptable system of government, it was eschewed by the United Nations itself, the Prime Minister said, citing the veto power of permanent members of the Security Council. It was unacceptable for each of them to be more powerful than the whole membership, and the veto should go. He went on to say that Malaysia believed in the universality of human rights, but not the irresponsible variety propounded by the West. Human rights was not a license to do anything regardless of the rights of others. A society had a right to protect itself from the unbridled exercise of rights by individuals or minorities which, in the West, had aided the collapse of morality and the social structure. Malaysia took exception to preachings on human rights from people who condoned ethnic cleansing in Bosnia and Herzegovina. "Until they redeem themselves there, all their talk of human rights sounds hollow," he said.

* * *

Begum Khaleda Zia, Prime Minister of Bangladesh, told the General Assembly on Friday that her country's success as a democracy depended largely on the alleviation of poverty. Nurturing democracy in third world countries required sincere cooperation from the industrialized countries. The concept of the "human development index" was inadequate as it did not capture the indigenous cultures and values of different civilizations, and a new dimension should be added to the development framework of the less developed countries. International rule of law was vital for the security of small and weak States, she said, stressing the importance of a river water convention, the law of the sea, environmental protection and universal acceptance of the jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice.

The ecological balance of the planet was being disrupted, but the blame was being shifted to the developing countries, she continued. However, their capacity to pollute was insignificant, and the major responsibility for prevention lay with the developed countries. Bangladesh called on donor countries to pay attention to its indigenous initiatives and development programmes while providing assistance. Unrealistic conditions created unnecessary obstacles to development. A State could not become self-reliant through external aid alone, and what was really needed was liberalization of trade.

* * *

(more)

* * *

Ali Alatas, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Indonesia, said that with the end of East-West confrontation, disarmament and security issues had acquired a new dimension. He welcomed the conclusion of the Treaty on the Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (START II) between the United States and the Russian Federation and stressed the importance of regional dialogues on security. The Regional Forum of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), for one, would give South-East Asian nations and extraregional Powers a regular opportunity to exchange views and consult on security issues of common concern.

International economic cooperation and development should be given top priority on the international agenda, Mr. Alatas continued. He called for the reactivation of a constructive dialogue between the North and South based on genuine interdependence and mutual responsibility. Urgent action was needed to bring debt relief to the least developed countries. The debt crisis caused poverty and underdevelopment which, in turn, gave rise to internal political instability. Referring to the World Conference on Human Rights, he said he disagreed with the use of human rights as political conditions for economic cooperation. He also questioned the feasibility of establishing a post of high commissioner for human rights.

* * *

Dick Spring, Ireland's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, told the General Assembly on Friday that a significant improvement in the United Nations' finances was urgently needed. He appealed to all Member States in arrears, especially those on the Security Council, to comply with their financial obligations under the United Nations Charter. Ireland participated in 10 of the 14 United Nations peace-keeping operations, and a significant proportion of its armed forces were engaged in those duties, he continued. Mechanisms were needed to allow peace-keeping mandates to be implemented in an effective, transparent and humane manner. It was imperative to keep peace-keeping and peace-enforcement operations in an overall political framework and to use every opportunity for reconciliation.

Citing developments in the Israeli and Palestinian relationship and in South Africa, Mr. Spring said that progress was possible even in the most obdurate of conflicts. Northern Ireland presented a similar challenge to the United Kingdom and Ireland. Traditional approaches had failed and new thinking was needed. The Irish Government was willing to look afresh at its traditional assumptions and at its relationships with others, and to accept the need for radical compromise. Both traditions in Ireland must find a way to share the island on a basis of partnership and trust. Peace and stability would not be found in any political system which was imposed, or which was rejected by a substantial part of the population, he noted.

* * *

(more)

* * *

Thomas Sanon, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Burkina Faso, told the General Assembly on Friday that the international community continued to be subjected to the adverse effects of East-West confrontation. The North-South rift had been highlighted, and long-standing wounds had been left gaping. The economic scenario was sombre and developing countries continued to be disadvantaged. Africa was staggering from one calamity to another, and structural adjustment had not overcome the continent's marginalization. The solutions to the problems were well known, he said, adding that Africa awaited implementation of an "agenda for development".

The global village was a living reality and affected the concept of security, he continued. Legislation had been passed to stem immigration into the developed world, but there was a refusal to understand that the source of that problem lay in socio-economic inequities. The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) negotiations must take account of the needs of developing countries. Fundamental human rights must not be compromised in the arena of economic policies, he continued. There was a need to defend all people or none at all. In the next two years, the international community would confront the problems of population, the promotion of women's rights and social development at conferences in Cairo, Beijing and Copenhagen. It was essential that all those problems be confronted, Mr. Sanon stressed.

* * *

A.C. Shahul Hameed, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka, said in the General Assembly on Friday that the rising tide of racism in many countries must be checked. Security was multi-dimensional, and must take account of economic crises, poverty and hunger, mass migrations, international terrorism and global environmental pollution. Those demanded a revitalization of the United Nations role on the basis of the accepted principles of its Charter. United Nations intervention in national disputes must be considered only at the request of the State concerned, he said, and indigenous peace efforts must be respected, encouraged and given time for fruition.

Sri Lanka was committed to social welfare and parliamentary democracy, he continued. For many years, it had virtually no defence budget, and when terrorism broke out, many thought it would disintegrate. However, the assassination of President Ranasinghe Premadasa, an act of terrorism aimed at destabilizing the country, was followed by the peaceful transfer of power within 24 hours to the new President, Dingiri Banda Wijetunga, vindicating the strength of the constitutional and democratic system. He stressed that the Government had never wavered from its objective of seeking a political solution to the conflict in the north-east. Sri Lanka was well on the road to attaining "newly industrialized economy" status, he noted. In a multi-ethnic, multicultural society, sustained economic growth was the best way to combat divisive forces.

* * *

(more)

* * *

Benjamin Bounkoulou, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Congo, told the General Assembly on Friday that the democratic process in his country had been very bumpy as a consequence of 25 years of totalitarian rule. Three weeks after the formation of a new Government, Parliament had been suspended. After several attempts at conciliation, a vote had been held with international observers. But the opposition, which lost the election, had contested the results, disrupting the institutional process. The right to civil disobedience was a constitutional right, but was not meant to destroy the social and economic fabric of the country.

Economic reforms had been disrupted by the political and social instability, he continued. If reforms were to be sustained, financial aid was needed. The crisis in the Congo was similar to situations in other African countries, which were suffering under the weight of foreign debt. He noted that France had agreed to partially relieve the debt of the Congo and other middle-income countries, and called for more innovative North-South relations. The economic crisis particularly affected his country, he said, causing juvenile delinquency, drug trafficking and AIDS. Economic and social development also depended on attention to the environment, as well as the promotion of human rights, he added.

* * *

Mohamed Alhousseini Toure, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Mali, said in the general debate on Friday t4at his country had embarked on a democratic process in 1991, although progress had been impeded by economic difficulties. Instability in the region, refugees, and the slow pace of growth were all challenges. Comprehensive financing for development was essential to support the democratization and political evolution of the country. He went on to say that the United Nations was weighed down with peace-keeping operations. Ethnic clashes in Bosnia and Herzegovina and elsewhere were setting alarming precedents and draining available resources. The efforts of the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II) must be aimed at silencing the guns, he stressed.

Production and consumption patterns were being revised on a global level in accordance with priorities and goals set at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), the Foreign Minister continued. The revitalization of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) was crucial, particularly in the context of the problems of desertification and drought. Greater democratization and equitable representation of all the players on the world's stage would help make the United Nations more dynamic in effecting development planning, he added.

* * *

Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali met today with the Permanent Representatives to the United Nations of France, the United Kingdom and the United States, who informed him of their positions on the question of Libya.

(more)

* * *

They confirmed that they had tabled a draft resolution on the tightening of sanctions against Libya, and said that they were in the process of consulting with the members of the Security Council, according to a United Nations spokesman.

The Secretary-General was scheduled to meet this evening with the Libyan Foreign Minister to continue consultations within the context of his efforts to seek the speedy implementation of Security Council resolution 731 (1992).

* *** *